“Watershed Board Discusses Ditch Inlet Concerns”

At their 6/28/10 meeting held in Barnesville, the Board of Managers, Buffalo-Red River Watershed District (BRRWD), answered landowner questions regarding the redetermination of benefits on Clay County Ditch No. 49. The BRRWD held the redetermination of benefits hearings on 3/16/10 and 3/22/10. At the 3/22/10 meeting, they made an Order to Adopt the Viewers' Report and move forward with structure replacements according to their 2001 Order. A landowner was concerned about the number of inlet culverts upstream of his property and requested that the Board provide a County Ditch No. 49 culvert inventory. The Board authorized Houston Engineering, Inc. (H.E.) to conduct an inventory of the structures this fall or perhaps next spring, depending on workload and weather conditions. The Board also discussed the landowners' questions about bufferstrip seeding and possible repairs along the ditch berm to prevent breakouts. The Board indicated that they were willing to work with the ditch system landowner regarding his concerns.

The Board also discussed a tiling violation in the E1/2 SE1/4 and the SW1/4, Section 32, Norwegian Grove Township, Otter Tail County. The work was done without a BRRWD permit, and the project did not have an adequate outlet. The Managers approved a letter setting a 9/15/10 completion deadline for restoration work. If the work is not completed by that date, the BRRWD could direct the landowners to plug the tile line until an adequate outlet is established. The Board also discussed another tiling violation in the E1/2 W1/2, Section 5, and the E1/2 W1/2, Section 9, Prairie View Township, Wilkin County. This work was also done without a BRRWD permit. The office will send the landowners a letter, advising them to obtain the proper permits, or the Board could resort to legal action.

Other business included:

- The Board discussed a drainage dispute in Riverton Township along C.R. No. 86. One of the parties asked for copies of our files regarding this dispute. As requested, the office forwarded the information. The other party notified the BRRWD that he had stopped using a 3” dia. pipe in his neighbor's driveway to drain his sump water in December and was now only routing natural drainage through the pipe. The two landowners are now involved in a civil lawsuit.

- Permits were approved to:  the City of Moorhead to amend Permit No. 10-35 for an additional 380 feet of floodwall to protect the north end of the Horn Park embankment south to Interstate-94 (I-94); Trosvik, Inc. to install random tiling in the E1/2 SE1/4, Section 6, and the NE1/4 NE1/4, Section 7, Trondhjem Township, Otter Tail County; Harmen Tande to pattern tile 134 acres in the SE1/4, Section 24, Oakport Township, Clay County, which will outlet to Clay County Ditch No. 35; Dave Larson/Rustic Oaks to add a driveway/culvert for parking lot expansion in Section 30, Kurtz Township, Clay County; Cary Danielson to install random tiling in the W1/2 NE1/4, Section 7, Trondhjem Township, Otter Tail County, which will outlet to a natural waterway; and the City of Moorhead to raise and extend the Woodlawn Park levee, north of 8th AVE, adjacent to Elm ST and the Red River.

- The Board discussed a drainage project conducted along 190th ST S in Sections 17 and 18, Skree Township, Clay County, that apparently drained several wetlands. Representatives from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are investigating.

- The Board discussed the status of Project No. 65, Clay/Wilkin County Line Outlet, east of Barnesville. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) notified the BRRWD that they have submitted a funding proposal to the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Grants Program to study the wetland highwater problems in this area. Prairie View Township has installed a culvert through 310th AVE to dewater the road.

- The Board discussed the status of the LaBelle/Boyer Lakes Outlet, east of Lake Park. The LaBelle Lake outlet was functional on 6/04/10. The contractor has finished boring the outlet pipe along Trunk
Highway No. 10. The Managers approved an easement payment to landowners on Little Boyer Lake. The office will issue a check when we receive their signed easement. LaBelle Lake is already down about 1 foot. The Board discussed a possible texas crossing near the project outlet on Little Boyer Lake to accommodate large machinery.

- A survey has been completed, and the alignment set for a road ditch cleanout in Section 24, Moorhead Township, Clay County, in conjunction with Project No. 57, Moorhead I-94 Flood Control. The BRRWD plans to schedule a meeting with the City of Moorhead and the landowners to make plans to get the work done this fall.

- Appraisers started their work on Project No. 50, Cromwell Township Highwater Outlet. The Managers discussed the project design and alignment. It appears that the project will not completely dewater "Cemetery Road", which could affect project benefits. The USFWS has agreed to work with the BRRWD to issue a 30-day permit to operate the project once it is completed.

- The Board signed a $4 million grant agreement from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for Project No. 49, Oakport Flood Mitigation. The Army Corps of Engineers (COE) is still working on their wetland review/permit. As soon as an archeological investigation is completed, and the COE wetland permit is issued, the contractors are ready to start construction. The Managers agreed to sell one of the Oakport buyout properties to Melvin Makela. This transaction will make it possible for the BRRWD to obtain Makela's lot, which is needed for the Phase 3B construction.

- The BRRWD will open bids for three NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) farmstead ringdike sites on 7/01/10. Another six non-EQIP dikes are under development.

- The Board discussed environmental concerns expressed by several agencies regarding the ditch cleanout along The Nature Conservancy (TNC) property in the NW¼, Section 12, Manston Township. The Board felt obligated to strike a compromise between the environmental concerns regarding the channel and adequate drainage for ditch system landowners, including the environmental damages caused by water breaking out of the ditch and causing downstream erosion.

- The Board approved an Order and permit application to allow the DNR to restore the Lawndale Trout Stream, located on the Atherton Wildlife Management Area in Sections 34 and 35, Atherton Township, Wilkin County, associated with Wilkin County Ditch No. 40.

- The Board authorized H.E. to investigate potential retention sites in the BRRWD in association with the Red River Basin Commission Long Term Flood Solutions Study.

- The BRRWD agreed to contribute $2,250 as a 5% grant match to fund Craig Lingen's position with the Wilkin Soil and Water Conservation District.

- The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources approved the BRRWD's Revised Watershed Management Plan on 6/23/10.

- Approved payment of bills totaling $259,514.42.

The next regular BRRWD meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 12, 2010, at 8:00 PM in the Barnesville office. All meetings are open to the public. For more information, please visit our Website at www.brrwd.org.